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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/KW/4635/18

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff, CF99 1NA

10 January 2019

Dear Lynne

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2018 following the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee's scrutiny of Estyn's 2017-18 Annual Report.

I note that the Committee has requested some further information on particular areas that arose during your discussions on 6 December 2018 with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector and his Strategic Directors.

You may be aware that Estyn's 2017-18 Annual Report will be debated in Plenary on 19 February 2019. As such, I consider it would be more appropriate to respond to the questions raised by the CYPE Committee pertinent to the findings of the report during that debate or, alternatively, I would be happy to attend a meeting with the Committee following the debate to respond to any specific queries.

In your letter of 11 December the CYPE Committee asks questions that are in addition to the findings in Estyn's 2017-18 Annual Report.

In relation to the queries regarding Professor Donaldson's review of Estyn 'A Learning Inspectorate' you have asked when I will provide a formal response to the report.

I issued a written statement on 7 June 2018 welcoming the report. The review of Estyn was commissioned by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to determine the implications of our Education reforms on the future role of the Inspectorate, and I provided my support to it. I advised at that time that I would work with Estyn and the wider education system to consider the report recommendations and their implications for our reform process.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Many of the recommendations in the report both refer to, and support, the ongoing education reforms. They help facilitate changes to align with the reforms, but also propose some differences to Estyn's role and ways of working that will build on the Inspectorate's strengths. Whilst ultimately the report and its recommendations are for Estyn to consider, some of the recommendations require joint consideration with the Welsh Government and other key stakeholders within the education system to take them forward, such as the proposal to partially suspend inspection of schools for a period of time.

It is imperative that we fully consider the impact of these recommendations. My officials are working with Estyn to do this. Before any of the recommendations are implemented, there will be a period of formal and informal consultation with stakeholders to gather views on the recommended proposals to determine the way forward. I will keep you and others informed as the work progresses.

The Committee has also asked for the latest position on the development of the Welsh Government's Assessment and Evaluation framework. In partnership with the profession and our key stakeholders in the middle tier, we are in the process of developing a new Assessment and Evaluation Framework to support the realisation of the new curriculum. Our ongoing reform of qualifications and our education system is an important part in *Our National Mission* to raise standards for and extend opportunities for all our young people. One aspect of this is the Evaluation and Improvement arrangements, which will be based on robust and continuous self-evaluation to drive improvement. I will be making more detail available at the end of January.

We have been working closely with Estyn and the OECD on the development of a national self-evaluation toolkit for learning and improvement for schools. We will be publishing the entire draft Assessment and Evaluation Framework in April for feedback and refinement.

Finally, the Committee has raised concerns about the position in schools in relation to wellbeing and has asked for an update on the steps being taken to ensure that training in relation to emotional and mental wellbeing of pupils forms part of initial teacher education and ongoing support for professional development.

We are currently reforming the way in which initial teacher education (ITE) is delivered in Wales. A key element of our overall reform agenda is to introduce a new more rigorous approach to the accreditation of programmes of ITE, governed by the EWC, so enabling the profession to set its own entry requirements. The accreditation process for ITE programmes available from September 2019 ended in June 2018 with [four ITE providers](#) showing the real step change required with high quality provision attracting the right people with the right skills, qualifications and an aptitude for teaching, to enter the profession.

Our [new accreditation criteria](#) were published in March 2017 and require our new accredited providers to design and deliver courses that support the four purposes of a new curriculum for Wales and address the six areas of learning and experience (AoLE) in order to develop future teachers to meet the needs of all learners. All teachers in Wales are required to understand and be aware of the well-being, personal, emotional and social development of all learners. Our new ITE Partnerships will develop approaches to assist aspiring teachers to manage their own wellbeing, as well as their ability to contribute to the wellbeing of the pupils in their care. The introduction of the Health and well-being AoLE will further enable trainee teachers to support learners in this area.

The [National approach for Professional Learning](#) (NAPL) was formally launched in Autumn 2018. The NAPL is centred on the learner and embodies the four purposes of the new curriculum. The approach is designed to be responsive to school, local and national priorities and encompasses the individual learning journey of all practitioners. Since

October 2018, Professional Learning Pioneers have been furthering their work in engaging with the emerging curriculum framework through professional enquiries supported by higher education institutions across Wales. These enquiries are beginning to focus on the significant implications of the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) for teaching and learning and the ways in the skills of the wider workforce will need to be developed. Cardiff Metropolitan University is supporting professional enquiries linked to the Health and Well-being AoLE initially up until the end of the Summer term 2019. Immediate professional learning implications will be shared more widely in due course, as professional learning pioneers begin to deepen their professional enquiries during the spring term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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